

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE CHILD

ROBERT R. RUSK





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OF THE CHILD

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SUNDAY
SCHOOL WORK

BY
ROBERT R. RUSK

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PREFACE.

AT the invitation of the Directors of the Dundee Sabbath-School Union a series of Lectures was given in November, 1914, to the members of this Union. The Lectures are here reproduced with but slight alteration from the original form.

The author is again indebted to Mr. J. R. Cameron, M.A., of Stirling High School, for reading proofs.

ST. ANDREWS, *March*, 1915.

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INTRODUCTION.

IT may seem somewhat inopportune to lecture on Religious Education at the present time when our minds are troubled with thoughts of war, and it might be suggested that advantage should be taken of the *moratorium* to postpone the course. There are, however, some relevant reasons why the present arrangements should not be disturbed. From the history of education we learn that an intimate connexion exists between national crises and new developments in education. It is after such crises that nations turn to their educational systems to discover by what reforms therein their national character may be purified and strengthened. It was so with Prussia after the defeat of Jena. Inspired by the "Addresses to the German People" which Fichte delivered at Berlin, the Prussians set about reconstructing their system of education, with the result that it has become almost the model for the world. So was it with France after the war of 1870; and it was no accident, whatever we may think of the action politically, that the Government which in this country was returned to finish the

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Boer War, passed the English Education Act of 1902. We have then historical precedent for dealing with an educational problem at a time like this.

It is likewise opportune that the aspect of the subject with which we shall be dealing is religious education, for it is in face of some great national calamity, some catastrophe by land or by sea, or at a time like the present when the lowest passions of human nature are laid bare, that ordinary theories of life afford no satisfaction and the religious emotions are aroused. As Arnold Bennett has said: "The present should induce a solemn state of mind, for which there is no word except the word religious".

At the outset we should like to disclaim the possession of any new gospel of religious teaching. We propose but to apply to religion the principles and methods which it is our daily duty to expound in connexion with other subjects. That such application is not more frequently made calls for comment. The professional educationist and psychologist is hesitant about speaking on religious education, with the result that methods and practices which have long been abandoned in the teaching of other subjects still survive in the Sunday School. The blame does not altogether lie with the educationist, for the results of his study and investigation in this field are frequently thought to

imperial orthodoxy, and his suggestions towards reform are usually ignored, if not resented. The neglect of religious education by professional workers is evident from the fact that in a standard three-volume work on Education, the first volume of which extends to over seven hundred pages, only seven pages are devoted to the religious development of the child.¹

That the professional educationist recognizes the need for investigation in this subject appears from the statement of a well-known American educator:² "The order in which religious truths should be taught, and the form in which they should be presented, is one of the great pedagogical questions which as yet remain unanswered".

Let us hope that it will not long remain unanswered, that the day will soon come when religious workers will more kindly than at present welcome the help of the scientific educator, when students will be encouraged to make a special study of religious education, and when Churches will endow at our Universities research scholarships in psychology for the investigation of the religious development of the child.

With these words of introduction and apology we now proceed to consider the end and aim of religious instruction.

¹ Meumann, "Vorlesungen".

² Stanley Hall, "Aspects of Child Life and Education".

LECTURE I.

AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

ONE of the chief dangers attending the teaching process is that the means continually threatens to obscure the end: we become so immersed in the actual procedure that we tend to lose sight of the purpose of our work, with the result that our methods, not being applied purposefully, cease to be effective. The epitaph that Arnold Bennett has suggested for the plain man reads: "Here lies the plain man of common sense, whose life was all means and no end". This might serve as a fitting professional epitaph for the majority of teachers. Before we can decide rightly *what* ought to be taught and *how* it ought to be taught, we must know the end or aim of our teaching and be ever ready to render a reason *why* we are teaching a subject. The pupil's unexpressed question, when we present a new subject, or begin a new lesson, is: "What's the sense of this?" It may not always be advisable to answer his question directly, but on the possibility of returning a satisfactory answer depends in large measure the success of our work.

We must then inquire to what end do we teach religion ; but before we can answer this question we must possess a clear conception of the nature of religion. As the means of teaching is the written Word, we are tempted to conclude that knowledge of this is the end of our labours. Religion is not, however, merely a matter of knowledge ; it is a mode of life. Jesus, it should be remembered, did not write a book ; He lived a certain type of life, and it is possible that this view of life existed for some time, and might even have continued to exist, without any written record. If we can keep before us the possibility of a "bookless religion,"¹ we may escape certain errors into which we should otherwise fall.

The aim of our teaching should be to induce in our pupils a certain attitude to life ; to distinguish this attitude from the æsthetic attitude, which is one of appreciation, and from the ethical, which is one of striving, we require to add, as the *differentia* of the religious attitude, that it is an attitude of worship. It should embrace, in the words of Comte, "Reverence towards that which is above us, Love towards that which helps and sustains us, and Benevolence towards that which needs our aid". To rest content with the acquisition on the part of our pupils of a certain amount of Biblical information, without their adoption of the right attitude to life, is to

¹ See Professor Moffat's article in "Hibbert Journal," vol. viii.

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confess failure. We should aim at religious education, not merely at Bible instruction, for instruction is not synonymous with education; the latter includes the influence of instruction on character and life. Some knowledge does not affect character, whereas some creates interest and through interest influences the will; it is the latter alone that is worthy of our consideration.

Whatever we may think of the pragmatic position in philosophy, we can yet accept as a safe standard in education the maxim that the test of knowledge is action. Applying this to religious education we can see that religious knowledge is not synonymous with religious education, that the test of religious teaching is not what can be reproduced by the pupil in an examination, but the measure in which that teaching influences his life for good; the truth must make him free. Religious teaching must then train to action, as well as train in knowledge, and it must arouse the emotions, since it is from these that action often springs.

It is interesting to note that the failure of religious teaching in Germany has been attributed to the neglect of the emotional appeal. Bernhardt complains that in the official instructions on the teaching of religion "not a word suggests that the real meaning of religion—its influence, that is, on the moral conduct of man—should be adequately brought into prominence. The teacher is not

urged by a single syllable to impress religious ideas on the receptive child-mind ; the whole course of instruction, in conformity with regulations, deals with a formal religiosity, which is quite out of touch with practical life, and if not deliberately, at least in result, renounces any attempt at moral influence. A real feeling for religion is seldom the fruit of such instruction ; the children, as a rule, are glad after their confirmation to have done with this unspiritual religious teaching, and so they remain, when their schooling is over, permanently strangers to the religious inner life, which the instruction never awakened in them."¹

SELECTION OF MATERIAL FOR TEACHING PURPOSES.

Our usual conception of religious knowledge is at once too broad and too narrow : it includes much that does not make for the religious life and it excludes much that can, and ought to be, regarded as of religious value.

The fact must frankly be faced that much of the Bible is of little or no value for inspiring the child with the religious attitude to life, and that some of it is quite unsuitable for presentation to young children.

A Public School Master is said to have devoted a whole term's Divinity instruction to the study of

¹ "Germany and the Next War."

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the military system of the Kingdom of Judah at a particular period of its history, and we have known Paul's missionary journeys to have been so taught as to be of as little value for the culture of the spiritual life as a knowledge of the capes and bays of England. These may be extreme instances, but almost every syllabus of religious instruction contains material of this nature, which can hardly be said to be "profitable . . . for instruction in righteousness".

George Eliot, speaking of history instruction, refers to it as "much futile information about Saxon and other kings of doubtful example." It would be easy to characterize much of the usual material of religious instruction in similar terms. If our teaching is to be effective we must seek out from the Scriptures live incidents, incidents which will appeal to the imagination of the pupil and lead him to act in a like manner; and the "kings of doubtful example" had best be ignored, lest the effect of our teaching be other than that desired. Herbert Spencer in his well-known work on "Education" raises the question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" and although a teacher of religion would reply in quite other terms than did Spencer, the habit of keeping this question constantly before him would be of great service.

We must then, for Sunday-School purposes, limit our selection of Bible passages to such portions as

convey ideas which will arouse emotional responses in the pupil's nature and lead to the development in him of a religious attitude to life. Other passages containing mere historical and geographical information or genealogical tables should be omitted: if such knowledge is necessary for general information or ordinary intercourse, it can be taught in the day school. It is, we believe, because sufficient justice has not been done to this first principle of selection that much of Sunday-School teaching is fruitless. That such material is suitable for examination purposes has doubtless contributed to its retention.

It will probably now be admitted that the whole truth as contained in the Bible is not suitable for presentation to Sunday-School pupils; that, if teaching is to be effective, a strict selection is necessary. On ethical grounds a selection might also be recommended. In devising a scheme of education for the rulers of his Ideal State, Plato believed it necessary to censor the tales of the Greek poets, which were viewed by the Greeks in much the same light as we regard the Old Testament stories. Plato's problem confronts the modern teacher of the Bible.

We must recognize, on the one hand, that our difficulties in regard to such stories are not in many cases difficulties to the child, and we must constantly refrain from offering explanations where no

questions arise. We must, on the other hand, not be misled by the appeal which such stories make to the child's mind: the child's unformed tastes are not to be taken as the standard of what is best for him. As Professor Welton¹ has warned us: "Though the products of primitive times appeal to one factor of his individuality, they appeal to one only, and as a consequence, they are not fitted to supply all the mental nourishment which he requires. In many cases, indeed, expressing as they do a stage of morality which was, in many points of practice, actually antagonistic to our own, they are quite unsuitable for leading a child to a comprehension of the morality which we desire him to learn to live." On this ground a censorship on some of the Old Testament material might be justified, and an additional reason might be found in the suggestion that certain forms of moral evil first come to the child's knowledge through religious instruction.

Not content with such censorship there are some who, believing that the child should be told the truth and nothing but the truth, would exclude from instruction what cannot be demonstrated to be historically true. This, however, is a false psychology. Plato, it may be recalled,² classifies narratives into two kinds, the true and the false, and somewhat paradoxically maintains: "we must instruct our pupils in both, but in the false first,"

¹ "Logical Bases of Education."

² "Republic."

for fables, he holds, are best suited to the child mind. He appears to believe that

Truth in closest words shall fail
Where truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors ;

and in this respect Plato is a sounder psychologist than the modern rationalist. We need not then concern ourselves with the historical accuracy of the material presented to young children ; if the religious and moral truths are suitable we should be satisfied.

At the same time we must remember that the whole truth includes the results of modern investigation and of the higher criticism. It should not be left to the sceptic to enlighten our pupils as to the results which contradict generally accepted beliefs : we should forestall him by showing our pupils how recent investigation has removed many of the difficulties which formerly were a hindrance to faith.

We now proceed to consider how by limiting the choice of material to the Bible we unduly narrow the range of teaching and perhaps give pupils false ideas of the nature of religion.

The religious life has found expression not only in the written Word but also in works of art, in painting, in poetry, and in music. In fact, if we were to remove from our National Picture Galleries the works inspired by religion, the result would be remarkable. Such works of art, representing, as they

do, religious incidents and personages, not infrequently convey lessons which could not be directly presented in words. It is our duty then to avail ourselves of such works, to learn from them the lessons that they are intended to teach, and to train our pupils to appreciate the truths they represent. Thanks to such books as Rev. James Burns's "Sermons in Art," "Illustrations from Art," etc., and to the reproduction in cheap form of the great religious pictures, the material for the type of lesson we have here indicated, is now easily accessible to both teacher and pupil.

A visit to a great cathedral might likewise be regarded as a religious lesson, for many would, we are sure, admit that under the dome of some vast and beautiful cathedral they have experienced emotions which were religious in the highest degree.

There is much poetry, not necessarily designated "religious," which might also be utilized for Sunday-School lessons. We need only instance Browning's "Saul," Maeterlinck's "Mary Magdalene," and Francis Thompson's "Hound of Heaven".

Music is also capable of arousing religious emotions, and pupils ought to be trained to appreciate religious music; their training should not be confined to learning to sing a few hymns. Even dramatic representation may come to be used as a means to the extension and development of the

religious life of the pupils. These suggestions indicate how the range of material suitable for religious instruction may be extended.

By limiting the selection of teaching material to the Bible we tend also to convey the impression that religion is something twenty centuries old ; the examples set before the pupils for imitation appear remote from present-day life. We must lead the pupils to recognize that the religious life is being, and must be, lived to-day. It is our duty as educators to be alert to the instances in action and in speech which happen in our midst and which can be regarded as religious, and to make these the subject of our teaching. By careful reading even of newspapers we can rescue from the medley of topics mentioned therein, accounts of actions and reports of speeches which may pass as religious and serve the purposes of our teaching. As illustrations the following may suffice.

A doctor in the South-West of Scotland was called to a shepherd's hut on the moors. He motored as far as the road permitted, and, leaving his car by the roadside, took to the hills. He had to tramp two miles across the moors and, on arriving at the house, found that the shepherd's wife was in urgent need of an operation which could only be performed at the county hospital many miles distant. Seating her in an armchair and lashing two poles to the arms, he and the shepherd carried her

in this manner over the moor to the car, which then conveyed her to the hospital, where the operation was successfully performed. Surely such an one might be regarded as also neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves.

In the infirmary of a large workhouse far from his native country lies a Scotsman, a pauper patient. He will never see his homeland again and will doubtless never leave that institution alive. A nurse doing duty there, passing one day through the ward, notices that the old man appears uncomfortable, and therefore procures a basin of water and washes the patient's feet, thus affording him the necessary relief. As she does so, the old man weeps in gratitude that a lady like her should do such an act for a pauper. It is unnecessary here to point the parallel in the New Testament, for few would deny that such an act would commend itself to Him "who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister".

From speeches of our public men, passages which are not only religious in tone but also sublime in language may be culled and turned to account in our teaching. To enforce the incompleteness of a life which is moral but not religious, the following might be quoted. "What we have to fight against is the growing materialism of the people. There is a tendency to think that national greatness rests on trade and territory instead of on character. Im-

perialism may be a noble faith if it seeks to make the Empire strong in order that it may carry Christian civilization over the world ; but there is much sordidness allied with it, the petty spirit of the trader, the greed of gain. In this sacred war, in this struggle for the recognition of high principle in public life, Nonconformists and Churchmen are natural allies. . . . There are other allies whom I claim, those who accept everything in Christianity except its theology. They ought to fight with us. In the mansions of their hearts they have built a room, richly gemmed, hung round with all that is beautiful in art and literature. The sword of Justice is there ; the sceptre of Righteousness, too, is there ; and even the robe of Loving Unity and Honour. Despite all these regalia, it is an empty room, for the Throne is vacant.”¹ That passage was spoken in the House of Commons in the heat of debate on one of the most bitterly contested measures that ever became law, yet it can be classed as religious.

In a recent recruiting appeal occurred the following : “ I know a valley between the mountains and the sea — a beautiful valley, snug, comfortable, sheltered by the mountains from all the bitter blast. It was very enervating, and I remember how the boys were in the habit of climbing the hill above the village to have a glimpse of the great mountains

¹ Lord Hugh Cecil.

in the distance, and to be stimulated and freshened by the breezes which came from the hill tops, and by the great spectacle of that valley. We have been living in a sheltered valley for generations. We have been too comfortable, too indulgent, many perhaps too selfish, and the stern hand of fate has scourged us to an elevation where we can see the great everlasting things that matter for a nation—the great peaks of honour we had forgotten, duty, patriotism, and, clad in glittering white, the great pinnacle of sacrifice, pointing like a rugged finger to heaven. We shall descend into the valleys again, but as long as the men and women of this generation last, they will carry in their hearts the image of these mountain peaks, whose foundations are not shaken though Europe rock and sway in the convulsions of a great war.”¹ Such a parable is surely worthy of inclusion in our teaching of religion.

Abundant material appropriate for the present times is to be found in that new and surprising product of modern warfare, namely, the soldier's letter. Professor Gilbert Murray in a pamphlet on “How Can War Ever Be Right?” has cited the following story of an unidentified private of the Royal Irish Regiment who deliberately threw away his life in order to warn his comrades of an ambush. The story was told by a wounded corporal of the West Yorkshire Regiment:—

¹ D. Lloyd George.

"The fight in which I got hit was in a little village near to Reims. We were working in touch with the French corps on our left, and early one morning we were sent ahead to this village, which we had reason to believe was clear of the enemy. On the outskirts we questioned a French lad, but he seemed scared and ran away. We went on through the long, narrow street, and just as we were in sight of the end the figure of a man dashed out from a farmhouse on the right. Immediately the rifles began to crack in front, and the poor chap fell dead before he reached us.

"He was one of our men, a private of the Royal Irish Regiment. We learned that he had been captured the previous day by a marauding party of German cavalry, and had been held a prisoner at the farm where the Germans were in ambush for us. He tumbled to their game, and though he knew that if he made the slightest sound they would kill him, he decided to make a dash to warn us of what was in store. He had more than a dozen bullets in him and there was not the slightest hope for him. We carried him into a house until the fight was over, and then we buried him next day with military honours. His identification disc and everything else were missing, so that we could only put over his grave the tribute that was paid to a greater: 'He saved others: himself he could not save'."

If we utilize such material in our teaching, our pupils will acquire broader views of religion, both in extent and in time, and will the more readily find opportunities of putting their religious teaching to the test of practice.

Thus far we have dealt only with the selection of the material for Sunday-School teaching. The teachers might, however, retort that that is no concern of theirs, that their duty ends with teaching what is prescribed. This attitude of blind acceptance should be abandoned. The arrangement of lessons in most of the schemes usually followed, although much improved of recent years, is still far from perfect. Teachers should consequently be free to try experiments in this field, to work out different selections and test these with their pupils, for only thus can progress be made. It is only by means of the judicious yet bold use of experiment, that has been the secret of the success of modern science, that educators will arrive at the methods most appropriate to instruction in Religion.

LECTURE II.

THE CHILD.

WHEN the disciples came to Jesus asking "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child to him and set him in the midst of them. If "the teacher sent by God" were amongst us now, and we took to Him our difficulties about religious instruction, we believe He would follow the same procedure, and calling a little child set him in the midst of us. It is the child in the midst that we now propose to consider, and it is the neglect of this factor that is almost unanimously regarded by professional educationists as the reason for the failure of religious education.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT.

The child's mental nature is intellectual, emotional, and volitional, and the teaching appeal must arouse all these activities. These are distinguishable, although not actually separable and independent, aspects of mental experience. The first is, however, so important in teaching as to entitle it to separate treatment.

The thinking of the child of the age usually met with in Sunday School is markedly concrete. When he thinks of anything he pictures it, and images it usually in some definite place and at some specific time; and unless the terms which we use can be translated by the child into images, the instruction will have no meaning for him.

Only those who have actually investigated the thinking of the child can appreciate how concrete and how dependent on imagery his thinking is. We do not propose to present statistics here regarding the amount of imagery and its distribution amongst various types, for these would necessarily be inexact and might even be misleading; but we prefer to quote a passage from R. L. Stevenson, one of the greatest of our amateur child-psychologists, giving his recollections of his own imagery.

"Rummaging in the dusty pigeon-holes of memory," he writes, "I came once upon a graphic version of the famous psalm, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. The 'pastures green' were represented by a certain stubble-field, where I had once walked with my nurse, under the autumnal sunset, on the banks of the Water of Leith. . . . Here, in the fleecy person of a sheep, I seemed to myself to follow something unseen, unrealized, and yet benignant; and close by the sheep in which I was incarnated—as if for greater security—rustled the skirts of my nurse. 'Death's dark vale' was a

certain archway in the Warriston Cemetery. Here I beheld myself some paces (seeing myself I mean, from behind) utterly alone in that uncanny passage; on the one side of me a rude, knobby, shepherd's staff, such as cheers the heart of the Cockney tourist, on the other a rod like a billiard cue, appeared to accompany my progress; the staff sturdily upright, the billiard cue inclined confidentially, like one whispering, towards my ear."¹

We may smile at the crudeness and inadequacy of the imagery which served to support Stevenson's thinking, but we must recognize that it is at least relevant: the "pastures green" are represented by a field, "death's dark vale" by a portion of a cemetery, and the rod and staff by a billiard cue and shepherd's crook. This relevancy is characteristic of the child's imagery. Only a few very philosophically-minded adults think without imagery: most of us employ imagery in our thinking, but the imagery which we discover, if we are successful in our introspection, is usually quite irrelevant.

"Should we be asked," says one writer,² "Are roses red? Has coal-gas a foul smell? Is that white beast a horse? Is it true that he is dead?—we should answer, 'Yes'. But the redness present in consciousness may have been that of a lobster, the smell that of castor-oil, the imaged horse may

¹ "Essays of Travel": 'Random Memories'

² F. H. Bradley.

have been a black horse, and death, perhaps, a withered flower."

Such imagery may be present in our thinking, but it is evidently not essential. We do not depend on it in the way that the child does for the progress of our thinking. A speaker addressing adults does not require to consider the imagery that will be aroused in the minds of his audience; but in addressing young children if our terms have no corresponding relevant images in the pupils' minds, we find that we have failed to convey our meaning.

It is surprising, when we consider it, how concrete the teaching of Jesus was, and how faithfully He satisfies the requirement that we are insisting upon, and it should be recalled that Jesus addressed adults and was not seeking any special simplification for the sake of children. Consider, for example, the interpretation of the parable of the tares:¹ "The field (picture) is the world (picture); the good seed (picture) are the children of the Kingdom (picture); but the tares (picture) are the children of the wicked one (picture); the enemy that sowed them (picture) is the devil (picture), the harvest (picture) is the end of the world (picture); and the reapers (picture) are the angels (picture)."

In these two verses there are twelve distinct images, and the experiences referred to were fam-

¹ Matthew, chap. xiii. Quoted in Barnett, "Teaching and School Organization" to illustrate reading.

iliar to those addressed and some may have been actually present to their eyes. It was indeed this characteristic, this ability of Jesus to explain the spiritual in terms of the actually existent facts and experiences of his hearers that gave his teaching its peculiar homely touch. As Sir Frederick Treves says of "The Land that is Desolate"; "It was in this plain unassuming country that the religion of Christ was taught. It was taught in the simplest language, in words that a child could understand; and by means of illustrations drawn from the lowliest subjects. . . . It was associated with such sounds as the splash of the fisherman's net in the lake, the patter of sheep, the call of the shepherd, the tramp of the sower across the fields."

As the appeal of Jesus was to the experiences familiar to his hearers, so, if our teaching is to be effective, our appeal should be to the experiences possessed by our pupils. This necessitates a knowledge on our part of these experiences, or of the contents of the minds of the pupils whom we are teaching.

Where are we to obtain such knowledge? In Britain 'unfortunately' there has been no investigation into the contents of children's minds to the results of which we can refer you. Our knowledge of such is derived from German and American investigations,¹ and we are on treacherous ground if we assume that these results hold for our pupils,

¹ See Stanley Hall, "Aspects of Child Life and Education".

for even the children of the same town but of different social status differ in respect to mental content, and an explanation which would appeal to pupils of one social class would have no value for the pupils of another class. Before we can hope for our teaching to be effective we must know the lives our pupils live, the experiences they encounter, the places they visit, the pictures they see, the instruction they receive elsewhere, the vocabulary by means of which they express their ideas.

Religious instruction is consequently dependent on the instruction given in the day school, received at home and elsewhere, and this fact may help us to widen our conception of religious education and to recognize that in it there is nothing common or unclean. In some modern Sunday Schools the junior classes are arranged in a Kindergarten department, and the lessons that are taught are hardly to be distinguished from those of the day school; they seem to be nature-study lessons rather than religious lessons. Some good people of the stricter set amongst us have taken objection to this kind of teaching; but when they come to recognize that it is like making bricks without straw to teach religion when the pupil is without the experiences necessary to interpret our terms, they may then see the folly of their objections and, from a little insight into the working of a child's mind, attain wider views of religion.

The effectiveness of our teaching is limited by our pupils' experiences: anything that will increase the latter will assist the teaching. This limitation imposed upon us by the nature of the working of the child mind makes all teaching difficult, but the difficulty in regard to religious instruction is undoubtedly greater than is the case with other forms of instruction. The meanings which we desire to convey are further removed from the child's experiences than the meanings to be conveyed in other subjects, and the ideas in which they are embodied, and the language by means of which we customarily seek to convey them, all tend to increase the difficulty. We have certain religious ideas and a religious phraseology which may have significance for us, but which, since he has no experience wherewith to interpret them, are for the child meaningless. As the simplest religious teaching is from this cause fraught with difficulty, we can at once recognize the futility of attempting to instruct the child in any form of theology.

The difficulty which confronts religious teaching is one which seems to be increasing by reason of the change in the child's environment brought about by modern conditions. "There is," as one writer has pointed out,¹ "just the vanishing of the nature element, the loss of that accumulation of presentation material to which the descriptions of Biblical

¹ Masterman, in "The Child and Religion".

scenes and the analogy of spiritual forces must always make in the mind of the child a primary appeal. There is the danger, therefore, lest religious teaching should of necessity become mere hard, dogmatic outline committed to memory, neither stimulating in its direct meaning nor actually incorporated into the constitution of the mind of the growing child."

Even the most concrete Bible stories, the parables, are in danger of becoming meaningless to the children of our modern cities. "Behold, a sower went forth to sow," is intensely significant to the country child, but it would be interesting to investigate, and doubtless surprising to learn, what proportion of children in an ordinary city Sunday School have ever seen a sower going forth to sow, and if the present progress in the adoption of improved methods by agriculturists continues in the future, there will soon be no sowing by hand, no loss of seed by the wayside, no seed laid in stony places, "where they had no deepness of earth," and none among thorns. The parable will then have lost its value and the various types of believers will require to be characterized by other and more modern terms. For the same reason Paul's exhortation to put on the whole armour of God sounds to the modern ear somewhat mediaeval.

When the child has not the experiences necessary for the right interpretation of our instruction, he is

tempted to apply what imagery he has. This projection of our meaning against inadequate experiences in the child's mind results in children's "howlers". These should supply us with material for investigation rather than for amusement, and they frequently give us an insight into the child mind which we could not obtain if we proceeded directly.

A teacher was required to teach the rudiments of the Old Testament to infants and for this purpose was supplied with pictures. One depicted Abraham with uplifted hand about to sacrifice Isaac. On asking the class, "What is Abraham doing?" the teacher received the reply, "Warming his hand". Could she in the circumstances have expected any other?

When we seek to impose on the child instruction beyond the stage of his normal mental development, we bring trouble upon ourselves. We tempt him to use imagery inadequate to sustain the conceptions we seek to convey. Dean Inge has in this connexion remarked: "I believe myself that heaven has been too often pictured by Christians in such a way as to deprive it of its religious and spiritual value. Many Christians are thoroughly materialistic in their religion. They consider themselves orthodox in maintaining that the Body of the Risen Christ actually flew away through the air to a place called Heaven, where a vacant throne awaited it. They

go to the Book of Revelation and to Milton's 'Paradise Lost' for their ideas of this place, deliberately forgetting all that they have learnt about sun and stars and planets. And as they make Heaven a geographical expression, so they put eternity within the framework of time. . . .

"There is not the slightest doubt that uneducated people generally do suppose the teaching of the Church to be that Heaven is literally a place where God and the angels live, and where good people will go when they die, or after the Day of Judgment, there to be recompensed for the good that they have done, and the evil that they have suffered, in this life. And the average man who thinks for himself wants to know what evidence there is for the existence of such a place, and he knows enough astronomy to feel the absurdity of placing it either inside or outside the solar system.

"What repels the working-man from Christian eschatology is precisely its unspirituality; and that is the fault not of the doctrine, but of the way in which it is taught. The time has gone by when people were best taught by gaudily-coloured, dogmatic picture-books. In dealing with the unseen world, the clearest pictures are the poorest."

Some conceptions, it is evident, cannot be imaged, and the teaching of these should consequently be delayed until the child has reached the stage of mental development when his thinking can pro-

ceed without absolute dependence on relevant imagery.

When that stage is reached, we cannot say. In an investigation of children's imagery an interesting sidelight into this development was obtained. One of the tests required the pupils who were investigated to give the cause of certain phenomena, amongst these being the rainbow. Many replies were forthcoming—the rain, the sun, the weather, etc.—in some cases no response at all was forthcoming. Under cross-examination, however, the pupils tested admitted that they knew the Biblical account of the rainbow, but did not consider that that was the kind of answer required. We may doubtless assume that by the age of twelve the majority of pupils have outgrown such Biblical explanations. If it were possible to obtain an insight into the religious concepts of a sufficient number of children, we could then say what form the teaching should take at different ages.

In the lack of imagery by the child there is nevertheless a slight compensation: he fails to interpret what should not be presented to him. There are passages in the Bible frequently read aloud in the presence of the young child which, had he the slightest knowledge of their meaning, would arouse curiosity and engender evil thoughts; but, although it is no excuse for our carelessness in presenting such material, it is a providential dis-

pensation that such material escapes the attention of the child. This is well illustrated by the story of the garbage man, the individual who in American cities collects the household refuse. The duty of one such led him to the top of a tenement, the refuse of which he collected on the way down. One day, just as he got to the bottom of the stair, his foot slipped and the whole collection of rubbish was upset over him. He thereupon expressed himself somewhat fervently and freely on his misfortune. A little girl on the landing above, on witnessing the incident and overhearing him, ran in and said to her mother: "Mother, our garbage man is such a good man." "What makes you think so?" asked the mother. "Well," replied the child, "after he had collected all the rubbish and carried it downstairs, he fell and it went all over him, and he just sat down and told the Lord all about it."

We have indicated the difficulties met with in, and the limitations imposed on, our teaching by reason of the dependence of the child's thinking on imagery. We now turn to the other and more encouraging aspect of the subject, the manner in which the child's imagery assists and makes profitable some of our teaching. If we translate our message into terms corresponding with the imagery which we know that the child possesses, then we shall find that it becomes woven into the fabric of

the child's mental experience ; it becomes, in technical language, "apperceived".

Almost the best illustration of the application of the principle of apperception which can be cited is to be found in Ralph Connor's "Sky Pilot".

In that work the author describes how the difficult and delicate task was laid upon the Sky Pilot of explaining to the daughter of the Prairie after her accident the significance of suffering. The mystery of pain has baffled all our philosophers and in the face of sorrow our well-meant consolations sound like mere chatterings of the teeth. Yet it was this problem that was set the Sky Pilot—how to bring the wild prairie girl, impatient and fretting at the restraint imposed upon her, to realize that in the gloom of her misfortune there might still flicker a ray of brightness and of hope.

Availing himself of the girl's passion for the wild flowers, the Sky Pilot related to her how God had planted the flowers on the plain and sent His showers to water them, but as there was no protection from the scorching rays of the sun, they withered and died. At length He sent His lightning and reft the plain in twain, that in the shelter of the gorge thereby created the delicate prairie flowers might grow. Then developing the analogy he suggested how the time of her misfortune might provide the opportunity for the unfolding in her

character of the finer virtues, of meekness, patience, long-suffering.

That is apperception carried to an art ; we may not be able to attain to the finished product in our teaching, but we should at least know the means whereby it is attained. We must know our subject and the contents of our pupils' minds, their experiences and their interests, and we must translate the one into the terms of the other.

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT.

When we pass from the consideration of the intellectual development of the child to the consideration of his general religious development, we find but little scientific knowledge of the latter available.

It is commonly supposed, and the supposition is supported by frequent statements in books, that the basis of our religious life is instinctive. "How often," as McDougall remarks,¹ "do we not hear of the religious instinct! Renan asserted that the religious instinct is as natural to man as the nest-building instinct is to birds, and many authors have written of it as one of the fundamental attributes of the human mind. But, if we accept the doctrine of the evolution of man from animal forms, we are compelled to seek the origin of religious emotions and impulses in instincts that are not

¹"Social Psychology".

specifically religious. And consideration of the conditions, manifestations, and tendencies of religious emotions must lead to the same search. For it is clear that religious emotion is not a simple and specific variety, such as could be conditioned by any one instinct; it is rather a very complex and diversified product of the co-operation of several instincts, which bring forth very heterogeneous manifestations, differing from one another as widely as light from darkness, according to the degree and kind of guidance afforded by imagination and reason."

Religion is accordingly not instinctive. The use of the term "instinct" has indeed become somewhat of a scandal in psychology: instincts have become so multiplied that almost anything is said to be instinctive. But the explanation of a highly complex process by reference to a fictitious simple instinct is not illuminating, and in the case of religion it is not helpful, as it need only be added that man has many other instincts, some of which are, to say the least of them, not religious.

Those who refer religion to an instinct believe that they have secured a firm foundation for, and a simplification of, the educative process. The assumption here made is that instincts are in themselves good and only require opportunities for expression. Some theologies, however, assuming the doctrine of original sin, are led to conclude

that all instincts are bad and that the child can only be saved by eradicating them ; it would be self-contradictory for such a theology to maintain that religion is an instinct. The instincts are, to begin with, neither moral nor immoral, religious or irreligious. They are indeterminate and can, by training, acquire either the one or the other set of characteristics. The work of education is consequently to repress some instincts or allow them to atrophy through disuse, and at the same time to train and organize others and utilize these in the service of the highest purposes ; and religious education must assist in this work.

The psychological bases of religious education must consequently be found in instincts which are elementary and common to man's other mental possessions. Correlated with such elementary instincts are certain primary emotions. Those which enter most prominently into religious experience are fear and wonder. Whatever is strange and unfamiliar excites the emotion of fear. The unfamiliar " becomes in man highly diversified and intellectualized, and it is owing to this that he feels fear before the mysterious, the uncanny, and the supernatural, and that fear, entering as an element into the complex emotions of awe and reverence, plays its part in all religions." ¹ The unfamiliar likewise excites the instinct of curiosity, and to this

¹ McDougall, " Social Psychology ".

instinct and wonder, its correlated emotion, must be ascribed the beginnings of religion as well as philosophy.¹ Fear and wonder do not, however, develop *pari passu*; as the latter is progressively satisfied, fear will be diminished. Knowledge, like perfect love, "casteth out fear".

Among the other primary emotions entering into religion is anger. Although its manifestations are usually regarded as irreligious, it may yet become the righteous anger which Paul manifested towards the foolish Galatians.² The instincts of self-abasement and of self-assertion, together with the corresponding emotions of subjection and elation, enter into religious experience. Sometimes, however, in extreme and unregulated forms their religious expressions are hardly to be distinguished from pathological disorders."³

These elementary instincts and primary emotions constitute the instinctive bases of religion. They do not, however, appear in their simple forms but as factors in more complicated emotions and sentiments, and it is by reason of this complexity, that the difficulty of tracing the religious development of the child arises.

Something might nevertheless be gained by iso-

¹ Cf. Aristotle, "Metaphysics," Bk. I.

² Stout, "Manual of Psychology". Cf. anger of Jesus, Mark iii. 5.

³ Cf. James, "Varieties of Religious Experience".

lating the simple emotions and seeking to trace their development. In the religious development of the child fear is a not inconsiderable influence, and some forms of religious teaching have availed themselves largely of its use. We learn, however, from studies in the psychology of religion¹ that the prominence of fear in childhood has been often over-emphasized, and that it is less effective than love and trust in stimulating the religious life of the child.

This fact may guide us, not only in the selection of the material for religious instruction, but also in the methods we employ to lead the child to a religious view of life. Solely from a medical point of view it has likewise been urged that "only the brightest and most comforting side of religious faiths should be presented to children who are by nature timid, imaginative, and apprehensive".² We should not then attempt to instil fear into the child, but should rather bring before him instances of God's justice, tenderness, and love.

The development of, and the teacher's attitude to, the instinct of curiosity are indicated by Professor Dewey in his work entitled, "How We Think". Referring in connexion with science to the saying that we must become as little children before we

¹ Starbuck, "Psychology of Religion".

² Leonard G. Guthrie, "Functional Nervous Disorders in Children."

can enter the kingdom—and his remarks are equally applicable to the saying in its original connexion—he interprets it to mean that the instinct of curiosity should be kept alive in us. The saying, he explains, “is at once a reminder of the open-minded and flexible wonder of childhood and of the ease with which this endowment is lost. Some lose it in indifference or carelessness; others in a frivolous flippancy; many escape these evils only to become encased in hard dogmatism, which is equally fatal to the spirit of wonder. Some are so taken up with routine as to be inaccessible to new facts and problems. Others retain curiosity only with reference to what concerns their personal advantage in their chosen career. With many, curiosity is arrested on the plane of interest in local gossip and in the fortunes of their neighbours; indeed so usual is this result that very often the first association with the word *curiosity* is a prying inquisitiveness into other people’s business. With respect then to curiosity, the teacher has usually more to learn than to teach. Rarely can he aspire to the office of kindling or even increasing it. His task is rather to keep alive the sacred spark of wonder and to fan the flame that already glows. His problem is to protect the spirit of inquiry, to keep it from becoming blasé from over-excitement, wooden from routine, fossilized through dogmatic instruction, or dissipated by random exercise upon trivial things.”

As the psychological analysis of religious development proceeds, we may be able to secure further knowledge of the parts played by the various emotions and from such knowledge derive guidance in our methods of teaching.

The child's early religion is a matter of habit rather than of knowledge. Through imitation he comes to learn and perform the actions associated with religious duties—the forms and attitudes of prayer, etc. At the earliest stages these are for him mere habits, empty forms, but their practice, usually in an atmosphere of awe and mystery, tends to awaken in him religious emotions and sentiments. The forms thus come to acquire meaning, and instead of acting as the means of inducing the religious attitude they become the vehicle of the expression of that attitude; the rôles become reversed and the outer observance ends by being but the reflection of the inner life.

The first stage in the child's religious development is accordingly determined by imitation, and it is found that at this stage it is the quieter influences that surround the child—those of home, parents, and church—that leave their impression on the child.¹ The religious nature of the child consequently requires for its proper development the appropriate religious atmosphere. The influence of the home is here all-important; but as that

¹ Starbuck.

is usually beyond the power of the Sunday-School teacher to affect, he should do what he can to raise the efficiency of the Sunday School in this respect. The worship element should be the dominating one in Sunday-School work, and every part of the programme should be directed to heighten and sustain this. As one writer on the Sunday School advises:¹ "Let every hymn, reading or other exercise be selected with reference to its influence on the pupil's life, let every detail be carried out, even to the announcements, in such a way as to strengthen feelings of worship, of honour for things divine, and of desire for nobler life. Nothing counts for more in the education of a child than the extent to which and the manner in which he expresses himself naturally in such collective arts as singing, praying and reading." Even the organization of a Sunday School may contribute to this end. Matthew Arnold in his "Reports on Elementary Schools" has borne witness to the moral effect resulting from a mere mechanical alteration in school organization. The religious effect which results from a reorganization of a Sunday School may likewise be great, for in a badly organized and ill-disciplined school there cannot be present that spirit of worship which largely affects, and contributes to, the religious development of the child.

¹ H. F. Cope, "The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice".

The transition in the child's development from the stage when religion is regarded as a matter of outward observance to that when the child has his first apprehension of its inner meaning is gradual, and for this reason escapes investigation; it is the crises in development and the abnormal features that excite interest and lead to investigation, and thus we come to possess more knowledge of these than of the normal. The final stage of this transition, occurring at the beginning of adolescence, is in many cases abrupt, even displaying signs of abnormality; it consequently became one of the first subjects of investigation for religious psychology.

Although attention was directed to the religious awakening at the period of adolescence mainly because of its cataclysmic character in some cases, investigation has disclosed the fact that such awakening is a normal feature of religious development and that in many cases it is gradual. There seems indeed to be no dividing line between the most decisive transformations, which would ordinarily be termed conversions, and the milder forms of religious awakening; they form a continuous series. This may be a consolation to some teachers who are under the impression that their teaching has been fruitless, because they do not see in their pupils evidences of a sudden decisive transformation, and may even be a comfort to some of these pupils themselves. The ideal to be striven

after appears to be "that the development during adolescence should be so even and symmetrical that no crisis would be reached, that the capacity for assimilation should be constantly equal to the demands that are made on consciousness".¹

This awakening period is characterized by doubt. Doubt appears to be a natural, perhaps even a necessary, stage in religious development, and, as recent psychology warns us, the repression of doubts may be fraught with danger. As in other forms of the loss of self-confidence, the doubt may in some cases become progressive; "if one thing is found which will not stand the test of reason, it leads to the rejection of other things with which the first is supposed to be inextricably bound up".² This progression of doubts in the individual usually follows the same sequence as that which results when the objects doubted are arranged in the order of frequency. In general, the objects of doubt are those things which have become crystallized into creeds and theologies and been passed on by tradition: more particularly, the authority or inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, some attribute of God (as His goodness or justice), His existence, and the possibility of immortality.

If this stage of doubt is successfully negotiated it is succeeded by a period of reconstruction, during which beliefs are rationally founded; they are no

¹ Starbuck.

² *Ibid.*

longer accepted upon the authority of another, but established as the individual's own possession. The transition is the difficulty, and the difficulty is only accentuated if the crisis is precipitated. We can best assist by strengthening the supports which are not likely to be questioned. With maidens we might deal at this period with religion from the æsthetic standpoint, in the case of youths with the ethical aspect, and thus enable the pupil to re-establish his self-confidence. It was with this in view that in the previous lecture we sought to widen the basis of selection of religious material.

That the crucial factor in the transition may be found in the sphere of æsthetics is evident from a testimony quoted in a *Psychology of Religion*.¹ "The reading of Wordsworth and Keats, and Kant's 'Critique of Practical Judgment,' combined with lectures on Wordsworth and Keats, opened up a new world to me. It showed me that religion was not identical with any Church. I felt God to be the great artist of all the outdoor world of which I was so fond. The change of 'the good into the beautiful' became the acceptance of God's law."

In some cases we can give no help: the individual, it appears, must work out his own salvation. He must for a season retire to the wilderness while we go our own way. To force our company upon him is sacrilege; and the virtue of self-repres-

¹ Starbuck.

sion at such a time has need to be exercised by those who would fain do good.

We have only in briefest outline traced the religious development of the child. Of the problems we have left unsolved, and the greater number that we have not even raised, we are fully conscious; also of the fact that the treatment of the subject given above throws but little light on the work of teaching. It may nevertheless have this recommendation, that it impresses on one the complexity of the subject and the difficulty and delicacy of the task of teaching religion, and these at least should be recognized by all who would undertake this work.

LECTURE III.

ARRANGEMENT OF MATERIAL FOR TEACHING PURPOSES.

PROFESSIONAL educationists and psychologists are unanimous about one point only in religious education, namely, its failure. An American educator, for example, writes:¹ "It is a question whether unskilful, even if well-meant, Sunday-School teaching is not responsible for a vast amount of scepticism in later years". A popular writer on education likewise maintains² "that religious indifference is a frequent result of religious instruction, that spiritual maladies come from the desire to convert the souls of children, numerous proofs can be given". Quotations in this strain could be multiplied, but these are sufficient to make us halt and consider our ways.

It would be unprofitable to consider the degree of truth in these statements, for the complexity of social and educational phenomena makes the task

¹ Stanley Hall, "Aspects of Child Life".

² Ellen Key, "The Century of the Child".

of determining the cause of such failure and estimating its amount, a difficult and treacherous business, but we cannot profitably ignore such opinions. If the possibility exists that our teaching may miscarry, it is incumbent upon us to adopt every means in our power to avoid such a disaster.

The cause of such failure may lie either in the wrong selection of material for teaching purposes or in the wrong presentation of material to which in itself no objection can be taken. The former error—doubtless the less serious—has already been dealt with; we now proceed to consider the arrangement of the material selected for teaching purposes and its proper adaptation to the stage of mental development of the child, for it is this aspect of the educative process that has been too much ignored in the past.

No matter what the stage of intellectual or religious development may have been, pupils have been presented with the same material; an Old Testament story was taught in the same way to a pupil of five as to one of fifteen, or some of Paul's theological dissertations might be the lessons for, amongst others, young pupils to whom the doctrines were quite incomprehensible. At one time we speak to the pupil of God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and, almost in the same breath, of God Who is Spirit and Whom no man

hath seen at any time. We likewise speak of the Lord of Hosts, the God of Vengeance, Whose Son is the Prince of Peace. These contradictions we leave unreconciled, and even less do we think of reconciling the Biblical accounts of natural phenomena with the accounts which the pupil learns in his science lessons and believes implicitly. Is it then to be wondered at that our teaching is frequently charged with fostering scepticism?

If for the time being we consider the material for arrangement to be restricted to the Bible, two possibilities present themselves. Either we can in the teaching of the Bible follow the historical order, beginning with Old Testament times and proceeding to the New Testament, or we can begin with what is less remote in time and, probably on that account, more familiar to the pupil, and thus from the New Testament proceed to the Old. If the latter alternative has not received the same consideration as the former, this is owing to the fact that in the arrangement of material for teaching purposes the subject-matter only has been considered and the child ignored.

Both alternatives have been maintained by different educational schools. One class of educationists assumes the principle that the child in acquiring knowledge recapitulates the main stages through which the race has passed in its evolution to present times. If we conceive of God as revealing Himself

in and through human history and the progress of culture, then the work of education, defined from this standpoint, is to lead the child to re-think the thoughts of God.

This principle of recapitulation finds expression in Hegel, who states it thus: "The past is traversed by the individual in the same way as one who begins to study a more advanced science repeats the preliminary lessons with which he had been long acquainted, in order to bring their information once more before his mind. He recalls them; but his interest and study are devoted to other things. In the same way the individual must go through all that is contained in the several stages in the growth of the universal mind: but all the while he feels that they are forms of which the mind has divested itself, that they are steps on a road which has been long ago completed and levelled. Thus points of learning which in former times taxed the mature intellects of men, are now reduced to the level of exercises, lessons, and even games of boyhood, and in the progress of the schoolroom we may recognize the course of the education of the world, drawn as it were in shadowy outline."

Many interesting analogies can be adduced in support of this view, but the principle is not a proved one. Its application likewise presents certain difficulties. The whole process of human

development has to be foreshortened to be brought within the compass of the child's school life: there must be taken into account the irregularity of past development, some ages being prolific in achievement, others sterile; also the law of acceleration whereby a decade of recent times counts for more in human progress than did a thousand years at the beginning.

The application of this principle in education gives rise to what is known as the Herbartian doctrine of Culture Epochs. According to this doctrine the material of instruction should be selected from the great epochs which mark the evolution of the race, and it should be arranged in historical sequence. One German scheme¹ runs thus:—

1st and 2nd School Years: Fairy Tales and "Robinson Crusoe".

3rd School Year (8 years of age): The Patriarchs.

4th " " Judges of Israel.

5th " " Kings of Israel.

6th " " Jesus.

7th " " The Apostles.

8th " " Luther's Catechism.

The determining factor in this arrangement is undoubtedly the material, and objection has been taken to this and similar schemes on the ground that only a small proportion of the children have the Bible concepts necessary for the interpretation of

¹ Ziller's. The correlated scheme of secular instruction from the Third School Year onward is omitted here.

the early Old Testament stories. The consequence is the failure of the teaching to insure close intimacy with Bible tales—"one of the gravest of all pedagogical errors".¹ The alternative has been suggested that the New Testament should precede the Old, and that the early teaching should centre about the child Jesus. The topics of the first half of the School year should accordingly be the nativity, the visit of the three wise men, Jesus in the temple, the wedding at Cana, the boy at Nain, the entrance to Jerusalem, the arrest of Jesus, His condemnation, death, and burial. When this arrangement is elaborated, the teaching takes the form of reversed history, that is, history which starts from the less remote and proceeds to the more remote in time.

Another school of educationists² abandons entirely the historical order, whether direct or reversed. It makes the child the determining factor in the selection and arrangement of the material of instruction. It assumes that the child's own experiences should furnish the content of instruction, that the whole of school work ought to deal with matters of present interest to the child.

Only in a few highly favoured cases can we admit that the child's experiences comprise all the

¹ Stanley Hall.

² Represented, for example, by McMurray of Teachers College, Columbia University.

material necessary for a complete and generous education. The doctrine would be justified if, for example, in the case of geography, the pupil had made a world tour and had experience of various countries and various climates. We have, however, in most cases to be grateful if the pupil possesses knowledge sufficient for the basis of the superstructure which the teaching will impose on it. "The old, the near, the accustomed," as Dewey says,¹ "is not that *to* which but that *with* which we attend." We can then do full justice to the child's present experience without confining ourselves to it: we can make the pupil's mental content the foundation, yet erect on it such a structure as we will.

If we regard not only the child's present experiences but also his psychological development in respect to consciousness of time, we shall find that the alternative between arranging the material from the present in time backwards or from the most ancient in time onwards to the present, is resolved, for to the child nearness and remoteness in time have no significance. The young child's sense of time is very undeveloped and we may say for him there is only one date—"Once upon a time". All past events lie in the same plane, and the Old Testament events are no more remote than those of the New Testament, or for that matter than events

¹ "How We Think."

which happened a generation ago ; they are all equally in the past.

The determination of the order of presentation of Biblical material must rest on other grounds than nearness in time, and chiefly on the possibility of translating the new material into terms of the child's present experiences. Stories of the Flood, the Rainbow, and even the Creation may not present any more difficulty in this respect than the nativity and life of Jesus. The products of the mind of primitive man may, as has been claimed by Herbart and other educationists, possess a simplicity which makes them even more suitable for presentation to the undeveloped imaginative mind of the young child than the abstract and complex products of later development.

In considering the selection of the material for religious instruction the principle was formulated that Sunday-School teaching should comprise only the live incidents, the presentation of which might be expected to influence the lives of the pupils. This same principle may provide a clue to the arrangement of the material. We should arrange the incidents to be taught in an order corresponding with the developing and anticipated needs of the child's nature ; but such an arrangement can only be effectively particularized when we have more knowledge of the child's mental and religious development than we at present possess.

No matter what arrangement is adopted, it is evident that, if not the material of instruction, the method of presentation at least must be different for pupils of different ages. This makes the grading of the Sunday School an absolute necessity ; but as this has been insisted on in almost all recent publications on Sunday-School work, there is no need to emphasize it here.

LECTURE IV.

TYPES OF LESSONS.

WHEN the selection and arrangement of material for teaching purposes have been satisfactorily settled, we are still left with the problem of how most effectively to present the material so selected to the pupil, that is, we must consider the various types of lessons.

Many may think that there is, and can be, only one correct kind of lesson, and it does seem that at different times some one type of lesson becomes so dominant as to exclude all other forms.

Some years ago all lessons were of one form, namely the question form. The art of teaching was synonymous with that of cross-examination, and the teacher might well have been characterized as an animated mark of interrogation. This view of teaching and this kind of lesson assumed that the child was possessed of all knowledge, and that such knowledge could be "elicited," as the Method books said, by skilful questioning. It was the doctrine of knowledge maintained by Plato when he said

that all knowledge and all learning was but recollection.

This doctrine of teaching derived a certain measure of support from the misleading derivation of the term education from "e" out and "duco" I lead. As G. K. Chesterton has put it:¹ "The process of education is represented as coming, not from outside, from the teacher, but entirely from inside the boy. . . . Somewhere far down in the dim boyish soul is a primordial yearning to learn Greek accents or to wear clean collars; and the schoolmaster only gently and tenderly liberates this imprisoned purpose. Sealed up in the new-born babe are the intrinsic secrets of how to eat asparagus and what was the date of Bannockburn. The educator only draws out the child's own inapparent love of long division; only leads out the child's own slightly veiled preference for milk pudding to tarts." "I do not agree with the doctrine," Chesterton adds, "I think it would be about as sane to say that the baby's milk comes from the baby as to say that the baby's educational benefits do. . . . You may indeed 'draw out' squeals and grunts from the child by simply poking him and pulling him about, a pleasant but cruel pastime to which many psychologists are addicted. But you will wait and watch very patiently indeed before you draw the English language out of him. That you

¹ "What's Wrong With the World."

have got to put into him ; and there is an end of the matter."

The assumption that the child possesses all knowledge, which only requires to be rendered explicit by the stimulus of questioning, does not seem to be justified ; either modern teachers have not the same skill in questioning as Socrates had, or knowledge is deeper down in the child's mind than it used to be. The pretence of extracting from the mind of the child, by the device of leading questions, knowledge which he does not possess, has fallen into disfavour, and recourse is now had to a method of " putting it into him," as Chesterton expresses it.¹

According to the method exemplified in the majority of Sunday-School journals there is only one correct way of putting knowledge into the child and that is the so-called Herbartian method. This method is usually regarded as comprising five stages or " steps ". These are named Preparation, Presentation, Comparison, Generalization, and Application. There is, however, no unanimity about the terminology, for " Aim " is sometimes substituted for " Preparation," " Principle " for " Generalization," and " Expression " for " Application ". The five steps have not the authority of Herbart ; for in his writings only four moments in the learning pro-

¹ A danger of the questioning type of lessons with young pupils is that it may increase the child's suggestibility and his tendency to substitute imagined, for real, experiences.

cess are mentioned, and these he names Clearness, Association, System, and Method. The number, the names, and the order of the steps now generally accepted all differ from Herbart's original analysis of the growth of knowledge.

The chief objection to the Herbartian type of lesson is that it is taken as the only type, that it is always of the same form and consequently stereotypes teaching. Of course, if the alternative is the Herbartian method or no method at all, then we should be forced to accept the Herbartian method; but if it is a question of good and bad methods, then it is necessary to indicate the defects of the Herbartian type.

The main objection is, as we have just indicated, that it makes the art of teaching too mechanical. A chaplain who was in the habit of visiting a prison was questioned by a colleague as to his procedure in dealing with the religious needs of the prisoners. "Oh," replied the former, "I just convict them of sin and call them to repentance." Only two steps, it will be noticed, are included here, and if, instead of being a chaplain, he had been a teacher, he would, we are sure, have been a strict Herbartian, all his lessons comprising the five steps—Preparation, Presentation, Comparison, Generalization, and Application. In either case the work would be somewhat uninteresting; and if only for the sake of variety and to maintain one's

own mental alertness, it might be advisable to vary the method.

The five steps, or even Herbart's own four steps, were never intended to apply to a single lesson, but only to a unit of knowledge, a method-whole, as it is called, that is, to a topic having a completeness in itself. The number of lessons necessary for the treatment of a method-whole is a variable one. Thus it comes about that what is technically termed the "Preparation," instead of invariably having one-fifth of a lesson devoted to it, may extend over two or three lessons; and the "Generalization" or "Principle" may take many lessons to attain. If we consider the method-whole, or such a section of knowledge as possesses completeness in itself, then we must conclude that its exposition is usually spread over several lessons: if we consider the single lesson, we must conclude that only in very exceptional cases can all the steps or stages be included.

Modern manuals of teaching do not attempt to regulate teaching by imposing any definite number of steps or divisions on all types of lessons. The number of steps varies according to the kind of lesson or according to its purpose, some lessons having four steps, some three, and others only two. Lessons which aim at increasing the range of knowledge, for example, are said by one writer¹ to have

¹ Welton, "Principles of Teaching".

the following steps: adjustment of attention; assimilation of new matter; organization of knowledge. There are only three steps here and, it will be noticed, no "Application". "The success of the lesson may be gauged by the desire aroused in the pupils generally to carry that line of study further."¹

Many of the lessons taught in the Sunday School belong to this class. They are the lessons which in an ideal system would fall to be taught in the day-school, and it is unfortunate that certain of the guides published to assist Sunday-School teachers seek to arrange the material according to the traditional Herbartian form, with the result that the application is usually forced and irrelevant and, it may be, even irreverent. The only possible "application" to such a lesson as that on Elijah's death and his ascension into heaven would be of the "Go thou and do likewise" type, the absurdity and irreverence of which is apparent.

It is this false idea of the incompleteness of a lesson having no direct application that spoils much of the teaching of stories; teachers believe that it is incumbent upon them to point the moral, whereas in many cases this is as unpardonable as explaining a joke. We should remember, as R. L. Stevenson says, that "all fables indeed have their moral, but the innocent enjoy the story". The

¹ Loc, cit.

real application of our teaching is the application made by pupils in life, in comparison with which the "application" in lessons is a mere teaching device.

The so-called "Preparation" stage is also beset with many pitfalls. Its purpose is to get the pupils' minds set in the proper attitude for the reception of the principle to be taught, to arouse, as we should say in technical jargon, the right apperception mass. It ought to provide the pupils with the proper orientation, to give them their bearings. If it evokes ideas foreign to the subject to be taught, or gives rise to divergent associations in the minds of the pupils, it has failed in its purpose, and many a lesson is ruined at the outset by a faulty introduction. An extreme illustration of this is the following: A student in training shortly before the Christmas vacation went before a class and began his lesson by asking the pupils: "What holidays are you going to get soon?" "The Christmas holidays," was the reply obtained. Then he proceeded: "What do you get at Christmas?" "Presents." "Who brings the presents?" "Santa Claus." "Well, it is not Santa Claus I'm going to talk about to-day, but the Noun Clause."

Many teachers seem to think that the lesson should be approached in as indirect a fashion as possible, that the best introduction or "Prepara-

tion" is that which is most remote from the topic to be treated. One might indeed conclude from a consideration of many introductions that the subject of the lesson was some delicate matter which the teacher naturally felt hesitant about mentioning. In some cases the Preparation takes the form of a guessing competition, the topic to be dealt with being mentioned, as it were, by accident. If in these introductions ideas more interesting to the pupils than those constituting the lesson are aroused in the minds of the pupils, they will militate against securing their attention. The time and thought devoted by teachers to the working out of "Preparations" of lessons are out of all proportion to the value of such introductions, and in many cases the end can be as satisfactorily attained by stating directly the aim of the lesson or merely mentioning the subject to be dealt with.¹ The advice we should give to Sunday-School teachers is: Begin at the beginning and avoid artificial introductions.

Thus far we have dealt only with the introductions and conclusions of lessons: we now proceed to consider the actual presentation of the subject-matter of the lesson.

One method Herbart terms the Purely Presentative Method of Instruction. In lessons of this type the teacher supplies the information as well as

¹ On stating the aim see discussion on "Zielangabe" in Adams's "Exposition and Illustration".

determines the sequence of ideas in the pupils' minds. Professor Adams in his "Exposition and Illustration" likewise recognizes the case in which the teacher has to present the necessary new ideas as well as to arrange the ideas possessed by the pupil. Both these writers acknowledge the place of purely presentative instruction, or the need for "telling" in teaching, and the impossibility of fulfilling the dictum that "everything must be elicited from the pupil by skilful questioning".

Herbart maintains¹ that although the purely presentative method of instruction is practicable only to a limited extent, it is nevertheless so effectual that the teacher will do well to train himself carefully in its use. Skill in this direction, he adds, is the surest means of securing interest. The requisites for the successful use of the method are a cultivated style of speaking; adaptation of the vocabulary employed both to the subject-matter and to the intelligence of the pupils; and careful memorizing, which at first should be done almost verbatim, but later on may be limited to the turning-points of the subject to be presented.

This method, Herbart warns us, is practicable only to a limited extent. Were it to become the sole method of teaching, the taunt would have point that whereas formerly the pupil learnt the lesson and said it to the teacher, now the teacher learns

¹ "Outlines of Educational Doctrine".

the lesson and says it to the pupil. The method is nevertheless appropriate in the teaching of the junior classes, and in the higher classes in giving descriptions of scenes or vivid accounts of historical incidents : when so used, the presentation should be without explanation and without application.

The teaching of stories is the most usual form of purely presentative instruction, and as such can claim the authority of Herbart and Adams. But this does not justify the teaching of every lesson by stories, a practice deservedly ridiculed by Dr. Montessori.¹

The study of the use of the story in the Scriptures will give the Sunday-School teacher all the guidance required in this form of teaching.

Jesus in His teaching by parables used the story to personify abstract principles ; for example, when He said : " The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field ". In " the Good Samaritan " the purpose of the story was moral exhortation. It was the answer of Jesus to the question of the lawyer, " Who is my neighbour ? " or rather, Jesus did not answer the question, He simply told the story and He did not point the moral : He left the lawyer to draw the inference. The whole procedure, indeed, is worthy of study and imitation by the Sunday-School teacher. The greater suggestive value of the

¹ " The Montessori Method ".

story in comparison with direct exhortation or direct condemnation is also well illustrated by the effect on David of Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb:—¹

“There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

“And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

“And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.”

All the denunciations at Nathan's command could not compare in effectiveness with this self-condemnation of David.

The stories here instanced were all used with a purpose, but the purely presentative instruction

¹ 2 Samuel, ch. ix.

probably appears at its best in the stories which are told merely for the sake of telling.

In addition to the purely presentative type of instruction Herbart instances two other forms, the analytic and the synthetic, and Adams in his more modern treatment of exposition mentions similar types. The pupil may possess ideas which are wrong, or which may not be arranged in a way to suit our present purpose; these ideas have to be broken up and either eliminated or re-arranged: this is the task of analytic instruction. In synthetic instruction the pupil possesses ideas which are in themselves free from objection, and the teacher has only to organize these in order to produce the new arrangement or disclose the new principle which he has in mind. These two types of instruction are illustrated by the two stages in the Socratic method of teaching.

The Socratic method does not profess to impart new knowledge but only to reveal new relations in the knowledge already possessed by the pupil. The method is well known, and the Scripture lesson in Adams's "Primer of Teaching"¹ is an excellent example of this type of lesson. It has been maintained by many educationists that the method is unsuitable with young children; Pestalozzi, for example, is a vigorous opponent of what he terms "Socratizing". In the hands of a skilful teacher

¹ Pp. 101-8.

who is fully acquainted with the range of his pupils' experiences, and who is apt in questioning, it can nevertheless be used quite successfully. It has undoubtedly its dangers but so have other methods.

A type of lesson which we should like to suggest for use in Sunday-School teaching, and for which, so far as we know, there is no generally accepted title, is that of the comparison of Biblical and topical passages. The method might be termed the method of parallel passages.

During a period of industrial unrest when the newspapers were full of accounts of strikes and lock-outs, the lesson for the day read in many of the churches of the land comprised these words from an ancient law:¹ "Thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape: thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The reading to a class of a leading article from a daily paper on Industrial Disputes and then of the lesson for the day would serve as an illustration of the principle advocated: other illustrations have been indicated in our first lecture.

¹ Leviticus, ch. xix.

Teachers might at first themselves select and arrange for teaching purposes the parallel passages. At a later stage they might select the modern topic and invite suggestions from the pupils as to appropriate parallel passages in the Bible; these could be tried and the best finally selected for study. In this way the pupils would be trained to use their Bibles, surely an aim of Sunday-School teaching, and the ability with which they could discover appropriate parallel passages might be regarded as one of the best means of testing the efficiency of the teaching.

LECTURE V.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL METHODS OF TEACHING.

IN the special methods pursued in Sunday-School teaching there can be detected traces of the origin of the Sunday School; many of the methods are survivals of a time when the function of the Sunday School was to provide the elements of secular instruction.¹ The Sunday School is no longer mainly a place of instruction, even of religious instruction: it is, or should be, a place of worship for the child.

This change in the function of the Sunday School has come about gradually and almost unmarked. The Sunday School has divested itself of certain duties, abandoning these to the day school, and it has taken upon itself other and higher duties; but the transition has been an almost unconscious one, and it is not surprising that this change has not been reflected in the methods of Sunday-School teaching.

One of the functions of the Sunday School was originally to teach the pupils to read, the Bible

¹ Cf. H. F. Cope, "The Modern Sunday School in Principle and Practice".

being used simply as a convenient text-book. In many cases Sunday-School teachers act on the belief that this is still their aim, whereas the mastering by the pupils of the mechanical difficulties of reading should be left to the day school, and the Sunday School should confine itself to the inculcation of religious truths and to influencing the religious life of the pupil. If, for example, a passage of the Bible is set for study as a lesson, the teacher usually requires this to be read aloud, each pupil reading a verse. This may serve as a test of proficiency in reading aloud; but, as the aim of the lesson is to bring the pupil to understand and to appreciate the content of the passage, the reading aloud, especially when performed by different individuals, becomes a hindrance to the intelligent appreciation, as it interrupts the pupils' continuity of thought. In such a case, if all the pupils have Bibles, they should be set to read the passage silently, the purpose being to derive the meaning from what is read; if all the pupils do not possess Bibles, one pupil should be asked to read the whole passage through, while the others attend to its meaning.

If pupils cannot read, the time of the Sunday School should not be utilized in teaching reading—the methods adopted would probably conflict with those practised in the day school—the teacher should read the passage or relate its contents to the pupils in story form.

The second stage of such a lesson would be the cross-examination of the pupils to see that the meaning had been rightly interpreted; also the correction and amplification of the pupils' views, where necessary, by the teacher. The final stage might take the form either of the recapitulation of the lesson in connected form by the pupils, or the re-reading of the whole passage in the light of the new insight gained from the teaching of the lesson.

The practice of learning isolated texts or Bible verses seems still to be practised; its historical origin or cause we cannot trace, but the uselessness of merely memorized material is recognized by all educationists. A text might rightly be used, however, to sum up the teaching of a lesson, in which case it would more naturally come at the end of a lesson than at the beginning. In this case, too, the text or verse would have a close and intimate connexion with the subject of the lesson, whereas at present the connexion is at times somewhat remote. When a suitable text, closely connected with the subject, cannot be found, then it may without loss be omitted entirely.

Another Sunday-School practice, the learning of hymns, psalms, etc., by the pupils, is not usually performed by the most economical methods. The pupils learn one verse at a time and no attempt is made in certain cases to connect these separate verses into a whole. The result is that in later life

there are but few hymns or psalms which can be regarded by the adult as real mental possessions. Did some of us who must have spent, apparently to no purpose, hours and hours in memorizing isolated verses of hymns, psalms, and disjointed texts, but retain as permanent possessions, always available, half a dozen hymns and a like number of Biblical prose passages, we should regard ourselves as rich in this respect.

The investigations of experimental pedagogy have thrown considerable light on the most economical methods of learning ; but before illustrating how the results of these investigations can be applied in the teaching of hymns and psalms, we should like to raise the question, what hymns, psalms, or passages of Scripture are most worth learning.

A writer on the Sunday School advises :¹ "Select your hymns with great care ; they are mighty teachers. Learn to know what are the really great hymns, the splendid heritage of our faith. Let the school learn to sing these without books." The same may be said of selected prose passages from the Bible, and in Scotland of certain metrical psalms which have become part of the heritage of the nation ; these should be so learned that the pupils may be able at any moment to repeat them.

It would be a simple matter to determine what

¹ Cope.

hymns and prose passages are considered to be of most worth for learning purposes. A questionnaire might be sent round Sunday-School teachers and others, asking them to give in order of preference the hymns and Scripture passages which they would like to have always within recall without recourse to books. The replies could be collated and the most popular selected. The selected list could then be arranged in order of difficulty for teaching purposes.

Having decided what is to be taught, we must consider how it can be taught most economically and efficiently. It may here be stated that the young child has no special native ability for memorizing material which is unintelligible to him, as has long been supposed. His power of memorizing improves up to about twenty-five years of age and his capacity for the retention of memorized material is best about fourteen years of age. The ease of learning also increases in proportion to the understanding of the passage to be memorized.

The first stage of teaching a hymn or prose passage is for the teacher to analyse what is to be taught and to explain to the pupils the structure of the piece. With young pupils the passage to be learned will doubtless present a series of images connected together in an orderly sequence; with older pupils, a series of ideas connected together in a logical fashion. The structure of the piece should

thus be rendered explicit, and the pupils should be questioned, to see that it has been apprehended.

The teacher should then proceed to clothe this skeleton with words, using at places the actual wording, when this is specially appropriate, and at the same time introducing and explaining any unusual or new terms. This stage is most important; for it prevents the pupil, when he himself sets about learning the piece, from introducing mistakes. As it has been affirmed that the length of time required to master a piece perfectly is in part dependent on the number of mistakes made at the first learning, it becomes evident how necessary it is that the first learning should be as free from errors as possible.

The pupil should thereafter be set to memorize the piece. In doing so he should each time read it through from beginning to end: he should not be allowed to learn the first verse and, when this is mastered, proceed to the second and so on, and after the learning of the last verse proceed to connect all the verses together. This latter procedure has been demonstrated to be a most uneconomical method of learning, as it creates numerous associations which are unnecessary in the final reproduction.

After the pupil, adopting the whole and not the part method of learning, has proceeded some way in the learning, he should be encouraged to attempt to recall the whole. This attempted recall

has been stated to have more value than an additional repetition, and it enables the pupil to discover the weak points in his learning and to concentrate most carefully on these in his subsequent efforts.

To the adoption of the whole method of learning it might be objected that, if we assume all the preparation to be done at the Sunday School, the short time available during the Sunday-School lesson would allow of only one or two repetitions of the whole at one lesson, and these would be entirely forgotten by the next lesson; whereas by limiting the learning to one verse one would secure that something was really accomplished. This view is not, however, substantiated; for it is found that the greater the period over which the repetitions in learning are spread, the more effective are such repetitions. Thus two repetitions repeated at intervals of a week for six weeks are more effective than twelve repetitions all at one time; the reason appears to be that the mind in learning seems to continue at its task for a time after the actual learning has ceased, and that this additional effect is lost if another learning is immediately superimposed. The mind should then be allowed to rest after learning, to give the impression time to set; and this helps to explain the fact of the greater distribution of learnings being the more effective. The long intervals between the weekly meetings

of the Sunday School might then be an advantage, instead of a disadvantage, in learning.

This instance may illustrate the changes in methods of learning resulting from modern psychological investigation, of which the Sunday School might avail itself.

There is one method of instruction which is hallowed by long use but faith in which is now failing, namely, teaching by means of a catechism. It would be difficult to cite a subject other than religion in the teaching of which this method survives. One might excuse certain Churches for retaining their catechisms on sentimental grounds. But for the Socialists to sanction a catechism seems a strange concession to conservatism, and for the author of a work on School Reform¹ to publish a catechism on Religion without an antecedent examination of this form of teaching appears peculiarly inconsistent; one wonders what he would have to say if a minister of religion proposed to teach science by means of a catechism.

R. L. Stevenson, referring to the English and Scottish systems, says: "The whole of the two divergent systems is summed up, not merely speciously, in the two first questions of the rival catechisms, the English tritely inquiring, 'What is your name?' the Scottish striking at the very roots of life with, 'What is the chief end of man?' and

¹ Sir Oliver Lodge, "The Substance of Faith".

answering nobly if obscurely, 'To glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever'." Now from the pedagogical standpoint we are inclined to think that, so far at least as this question is concerned, the English catechism is the less objectionable, for it comes nearer to the level of the child's experience. And surely the agnostic has cause to smile as he hears us asking a child to define God, when, as he reminds us, our greatest men of science hesitate to define a blackbeetle.

The Scotsman's faith in the catechism seems indeed to be failing. On the "Shorter Catechism," the one with which most Scottish adults are familiar, used to be inscribed, "Approved by the General Assembly to be a Directory for catechizing such as are of weaker capacity," having in view doubtless the Longer Catechism now almost unknown. But even the Shorter Catechism is being abandoned in favour of a still further shortened form, whether on the assumption that the former was unsuitable, or that the Scottish intellect has deteriorated, we are left in doubt. In "Buntzie Pulls the Strings" Rab complains to his father that he cannot understand the catechism, and his father retorts, "You're no' meant tae un'erstan' it": the laughter of a Scottish audience that greets this retort appears to be the final word in the criticism of the Scottish catechism.

Our complaint against the catechism is not,

however, on the ground of its contents but by reason of its form. The form of question and answer presupposes that the work of teaching has been done, that the child has been led to understand what he so glibly repeats: if we do not presuppose this, then it is simply a matter of vain repetition. And it is the prior process to which attention should be directed.

In answer to this it is frequently maintained that the child will in time come to understand it. Such an argument no longer appeals to the educationist. It only requires to be generalized and advocated in regard to the teaching of other school subjects to prove it untenable. Instead, however, of coming to understand it many pupils come to criticize it. The application of the belief in the hardening doctrine physically has hardened many a child out of the world, and many a one may have been hardened out of the kingdom of heaven by application of the same doctrine in the spiritual sphere.

The catechism is not a form of teaching religion. It may be a method of summarizing and testing the teaching; but, as it threatens to do in many other subjects, examination has here taken the place of teaching.

"The mechanical method of catechizing is," says Kant in his work "On Education," "useful in some sciences; for instance, in the explanation of

revealed religion. In universal religion, on the other hand, we must employ the Socratic method." May it not be, then, that the gradual abandonment of the catechism is but an indication that our conception of religion is changing, becoming perhaps broader and less dogmatic?

It may be that, like some other Sunday-School practices, the persistence of examinations in Sunday-School work can be attributed to the original connexion of the Sunday School with secular instruction. Examination has, however, long ago been superseded by inspection in the secular subjects of day-school teaching, but certain churches still require religious examinations in the Sunday Schools and probably also use their influence to maintain these in the day schools, thus illustrating the statement that Sunday-School teaching has not kept pace with the progress in the teaching of subjects other than religion.

A writer on the Sunday School, defending¹ examinations in religious instruction, states: "Examinations are tests of knowledge and not of character. It is feared that examinations will create rivalries and feelings of envy if the standings are announced. Why should they do so here any more than in the public school? They will not, if conducted with absolute impartiality and fairness." This statement, however, begs the question.

¹ Cope.

So far as we have any scientific knowledge of the effects of examination conditions on the work of pupils, we know that we do not get the real value of the work or the proper standings of the pupils when it is thus tested.¹ Examinations, accordingly, are not satisfactory tests of knowledge. Even the best conducted examinations in day schools do arouse bad feelings amongst the pupils, when the standings are announced ; and it is most important that this should not be associated with religious teaching.

Not much, we fear, would be gained by the substitution of inspection for examination in religious education. The freedom which in other subjects teachers believed they would gain by the alteration has turned out to be but a change of calamity, for whereas examination merely looked to results and left the teacher free to adopt whatever methods he thought fit, inspection tends to control even the teacher's methods. The function of an inspector in an educational system should be similar to that of a consulting physician in a community : he should be the person for whom teachers should send when difficulties occur, and he ought to be able to diagnose the cause of the difficulty and to prescribe the treatment. The present function of the inspector is, however, to see that the work of the teacher and of the school is duly performed ; but Churches ought to be able to trust their own Sunday-School teachers,

¹ See writer's "Introduction to Experimental Education".

so that for religious teaching even inspection seems unnecessary.

The attitude of Churches to examinations is but an illustration of the present universal wrong attitude to religious education, indicated in our first lecture. It reduces education to instruction ; it makes religion a matter of knowledge, not a mode of life ; and it tends to assign importance to such aspects of knowledge as are of least value for the religious life. It sacrifices reality to mere appearance, the spirit to the letter. In "Erewhon," Samuel Butler remarks : " I have met with many very godly people who have had a great knowledge of divinity but no sense of the divine : and again, I have seen a radiance upon the face of those who were worshipping the divine either in art or nature—in picture or statue—in field or cloud or sea—in man, woman, or child—which I have never seen kindled by any talking about the nature and attributes of God. Mention but the word divinity, and the sense of the divine is clouded." So might we say, Mention but the word "examination" and the true spirit of religious teaching is sacrificed.

Instead of depending on examinations to maintain or elevate the standard of Sunday-School teaching, the Churches should rather seek to improve the training of their Sunday-School teachers. Weekly symposiums of teachers to consider together the subject of the following Sunday's lesson

might be held, and the interchange of views both on the subject-matter of instruction and on the methods of presentation might be found profitable. Courses of lectures and demonstration lessons might also assist in improving the level of teaching and thus render examinations unnecessary.

CONCLUSION.

AS will be evident to the reader, the exposition of the Religious Education of the Child given in the preceding pages does not pretend to be an exhaustive and final presentation of the subject. It is the writer's opinion that the time has not yet come for a complete and systematic treatment of this topic, and that any attempt to impose finality might be harmful to its proper and full development. The publication of these lectures may nevertheless serve the useful purpose of furnishing suggestion and guidance to writers who, when the time arrives, may attempt more ambitious treatments of this important subject. The subjects which must be considered in a comprehensive survey of religious education include the aim of the subject, the curriculum, the religious nature and development of the child, the methods of presentation, the devices of teaching, and the organization of religious teaching.

To the teacher engaged in the practical work of religious education this publication may be of value in leading him to take a wider and higher view of this service, thus enhancing the meaning and purpose of his teaching and thereby raising its efficiency.

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